

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

STATUS OF APPLICATION

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claim 9 has been canceled. Claims 1, 4, 7, 11, and 14 were amended. Claims 16-20 were added. Support for the new and amended claims can be found in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Admitted Prior Art ("APA").

THE CLAIMS

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in light of the amendments to the claims and following remarks.

Claims 1-3 and 17-19

Applicants submit that the APA does not teach or suggest every feature recited in claim 1. For example, claim 1, recites, in part, "based on a product name of a semiconductor device product and names of processes used to process said product inputted through a terminal, automatically accessing a design database by a computer processor via a communication means to download chip matrix data and chip size data; automatically setting an inspection condition by said computer processor using the downloaded chip matrix data and chip size data." Nowhere does Figure 1 of the present application teach or suggest accessing a database, much less a design database, via communication means to download chip matrix data and chip size data. On the contrary, Figure 1 explicitly shows chip matrix and chip size to be set and operated by worker. Similarly, nowhere does Figure 1 teach or suggest automatically setting an inspection condition. Figure 1 indicates each and every step in the conventional process is set and operated by worker.

The present invention as claimed clearly provides advantages over the conventional process depicted in Figure 1. As stated in the specification, "[i]n a device that inspects various types of intricate patterns including those on semiconductor devices as in the above description of conventional technology, various inspection conditions must be set and

these conditions must be adjusted for each product and each process. The inspection device is occupied while conditions are being extracted, thus actually reducing inspection time. Also, because there are a plurality of entry items, a worker who sets conditions requires a certain amount of training and must be experienced in the use of the device. Furthermore, while conditions are being extracted, there is an accumulation of semiconductor products. Therefore, the turnaround time (TAT) of semiconductor devices is extended and costs increase."

(Specification: pp. 4-5).

Accordingly, claim 1 should be allowable for at least the above reason. Claims 2-3 and 17-19, which depend on claim 1, should at least be allowable for a similar rationale as claim 1, as well as the additional features they recite.

Claims 4-6

Claim 4 recites, in part, "... based on a product name of a semiconductor device product and names of processes used to process said product inputted through a terminal, automatically accessing a design database by a computer processor via a communication means to download chip matrix data and chip size data; automatically setting inspection conditions by said computer processor using said downloaded chip matrix data and chip size data; ..." As discussed above for claim 1, APA does not teach or suggest these features. Thus, claim 4 should at least be allowable for this reason. Claims 5-6, which depend from claim 4, should at least be allowable for a similar rationale, as well as the additional features they recite.

Claims 7-8 and 10

Claim 7 recites, in part, "... classifying defects detected at said detecting as disposed in a transparent film or a non-transparent film by using the downloaded chip matrix data and chip size data; ..." The APA does not teach or suggest classifying defects detected, much less whether or not such defects are disposed in a transparent film or non-transparent film. Examiner cites Figure 1 and page 4, second paragraph of the specification as allegedly showing the claimed classifying. However, nowhere in Figure 1 or the cited passages discuss classifying defects. Thus, claim 7 should at least be allowable for these reason. Claims 8 and 10, which

depend from claim 7, should at least be allowable for a similar rationale, as well as the additional features they recite.

Claims 11-13

Claim 11 recites "... based on a product name and a process name inputted through a terminal, automatically accessing a design database by a computer processor via a communication means to download chip matrix data and chip size data; automatically setting inspection conditions by using the downloaded chip matrix data and chip size data; ..." As discussed above for claim 1, APA does not teach or suggest this feature. Thus, added claim 11 should at least be allowable for this reason. Claims 12-13, which depend from claim 11, should at least be allowable for a similar rationale, as well as the additional features they recite.

Claims 14-15

Claim 14 recites "... based on a received identifier for the semiconductor device, automatically accessing a design database by a computer processor to download design data; automatically setting inspection conditions for the semiconductor device using the downloaded design data; ... and classifying defects detected at said detecting as disposed in a transparent film or a non-transparent film, ... and wherein said setting is performed without capturing an image of an actual wafer." The APA does not teach or suggest any of these claimed features. The rationale discussed above for claim 1 applies to independent claim 14. In addition, APA does not teach or suggest setting inspection conditions without capturing an image of an actual wafer (i.e., setting inspection conditions based on design data). The present invention as claimed in claim 14 eliminates the need to capture and save images especially using an actual wafer when setting inspection conditions. (See Specification: p. 15, lines 6-9). Thus, added claim 14 should at least be allowable for this reason. Claim 15, which depends from claim 14, should at least be allowable for a similar rationale as claim 14, as well as the additional features it recites..

Claim 16

New claim 16 recites, in part, "... said setting is performed without capturing an image of an actual wafer." The present invention as claimed in claim 14 eliminates the need to

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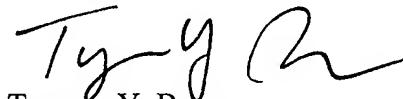
capture and save images especially using an actual wafer when setting inspection conditions.
(See Specification: p. 15, lines 6-9).

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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